

## **A quiz on British History from the Saxons to the Stuarts**

*to be solved within the next week.*

### **From the Saxons to the War of the Roses**

After the Roman legions left Britain, someone famously came up with the idea of inviting the Saxons to settle England. Who? Which other tribes decided to join the migration? How did things proceed from there?

The Anglo-Saxons have not left much literature for posterity. One epic, however, has survived and was even twice adapted for films in more recent years. What is the name of that epic?

The Anglo-Saxons some more notable kings, like Alfred the Great, and quite a few less notable ones. However, which Anglo-Saxon king was the first to call himself “King of England”?

The line of the Anglo-Saxon kings ended in 1066 with the battle of Hastings, when William the Conqueror defeated Harold II and founded the Norman line of English kings. Who else had to relinquish his hopes for the English throne at about the same shortly before?

Most of the impressive castles you can still see in Britain were built by the Normans. Why did they feel the need to do so? What problems did these powerful bastions bring with them for later kings?

In the 2010 film “Robin Hood” we see Richard Lionheart die during the siege of a French Castle. He actually spent more time in France than in England. Why?

In the very same film a “bill of rights” is mentioned that Prince John initially had to negotiate with his barons but then refused to sign. What is the real name of that document and what role does it play for English history?

After the death of Richard II, House Plantagenet was followed by House Lancaster, famous by its succession of the three ‘Henries’. Which Henry would you consider the most successful one?

In the civil war that was later called The War of the Roses, House Lancaster was challenged by House York. How did the war come to its flowery name?

BONUS QUESTION: In one of his famous speeches, Martin Luther King mentions the “summer of our discontent”. What does that have to do with the War of the Roses?

### **The Tudors**

Out of the War of the Roses, the Tudors emerged as the laughing third. How is that expressed in their Heraldic emblem?

BONUS QUESTION: Where did the Tudors originally come from and what is the original spelling of their name?

In the Showtime series “The Tudors” we see the young and athletic Jonathan Rhys Meyers play Henry VIII from his early days to his deathbed. What physical changes did Henry undergo in real life?

Before splitting from the Catholic Church and founding the Church of England, Henry was actually a stern enemy of Protestantism. For writing a pamphlet against Martin Luther the Pope awarded him a title that the kings and queens of England wear proudly to this day? Which title is that?

Henry was allegedly helped by a friend who was a great thinker of his time? Who was this friend and what did eventually become of their friendship?

Henry is most famous for the six marriages he went through. Which popular rhyme is used to remember the different fates of his wives?

Apart from sheer sexual interest on his part, what were the more pragmatic reasons for this rather frequent succession of marriages?

BONUS QUESTION: Technically speaking, how many marriages did Henry have? Depending on whether you look at things from a Catholic or Protestant point of view the answer might be a different one.

Before Elisabeth I could ascend her throne, her older sister Mary tried her luck. Her stern Catholicism was so unpopular that she had to go for a stricter policy to convince her people, earning herself the name "Bloody Mary". But, who was actually the bloodier one – she or her sister Elisabeth? And how can that be measured?

Which other Mary became a problem for Elisabeth later on? Why?

Under Elisabeth's reign, the English navy challenged the Spanish on the World's Oceans and explored many new lands. One colony was actually named after the queen and retained that name when becoming a US state later on. What is the name of that state?

## **The Stuarts**

When Elisabeth died a 'virgin' and thus childless, the throne was offered to James Stuart. Where did the Stuarts originally come from? No, not Scotland. Originally. And what does 'Stuart' mean?

All of the Stuart monarchs had their own problems with an institution called 'Parliament'. Easy as it is to see the parliament as a representative of 'the people', the elections of that time are considered by modern historians rather as a process of 'parliamentary selection'. Why is that so?

Charles I had so many problems with Parliament that he fought a civil war against it - the English Civil War. Aside from money and politics, what was the main issue that was being fought over.

After the Charles I lost the war and became the first and last English king to be publicly beheaded, former general Oliver Cromwell ruled shortly over a 'Commonwealth'. During his reign a lot of more or less radical religious sects gained influence among the English, including the Quakers, the Diggers, the Levellers, and the Ranters. Which of these was the most influential group? Which would you consider the weirdest one?

When the Commonwealth faltered Charles II son of the beheaded King was re-invited to become king of England. His reign, known as the Restoration period, was a time of literature, theatre plays, and music, much of which was shocking to the Puritans who had fought against his father. Yet, on his deathbed, Charles II did one thing that shocked them even more. What was that.

To get rid of Charles' son James II some English nobles instigated the "Glorious Revolution". Why did they want to get rid of him and what was so 'glorious' about that revolution.

BONUS QUESTION: While James spent in his time in exile, his followers hoped that he would one day return. There were two famous toasts they used to honour their 'real' king. One of them was performed with a glass of water between the participants, the other mentioned a certain 'little gentleman'. What did these toasts mean?